



## **All you need to know about the Australian Paid Parental Leave Scheme**

Over the past few months, you may have noticed competing and conflicting information in the press in relation to Australia's Paid Parental Leave Scheme.

These questions and answers intend to set the record straight and provide valuable and useful information for Australian families.

Up until now, Australia has trailed behind other countries that form part of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Development) in offering a national paid parental scheme. But I am pleased to say that this is finally over!

The Australian Labour government has come to the table and is now offering a paid parental leave scheme for all Australian families.

### **Am I eligible?**

You are eligible for paid parental leave if you have, or adopt a baby after 1 January 2011.

### **What if I have just had/adopted a baby or will have/adopt a baby between now and 31 December 2010?**

If this is the case, you will be entitled to claim the current Baby Bonus and usual Tax Benefit B.

### **What happens to the Baby Bonus and Family Tax Benefit B after 1 January 2011?**

Unless you have a multiple birth, you will not be able to access the Baby Bonus and Family Tax Benefit B unless you give up your eligibility to participate as part of the Paid Parental Leave.

### **Is it compulsory?**

No. It's a voluntary scheme. After 1 January 2011, you are entitled to **choose** to be part of the scheme or continue to receive your Baby Bonus and Family Tax Benefit.

### **I need to return to work early? What happens to the unpaid portion?**

If you return to work early you can transfer the paid parental leave to the other parent however it is worth noting that it can only be paid to one person at a time.

### **I have been working as a full-time, casual employee for the past 2 years – am I eligible?**

Provided you have been in continuous employment for 10 of the 13 months prior to the expected date of birth or adoption you are eligible. You must have worked 330 hours within that 10 month period.

### **I earn \$88,000 per annum – am I eligible?**

YES! The Paid Parental Leave Scheme is income tested and is not available to anyone earning over \$150,000.

### **I need to take time off because of pregnancy complications – am I entitled to claim paid parental leave while I am off work?**

Yes, provided you meet the eligibility requirements you will be able to tap into the parental leave scheme.

### **What I am entitled to?**

It is paid at the National Minimum Wage (\$570 a week before tax) and covers a period of 18 weeks within the child's first year.

### **Can I take more than 18 weeks off?**

Yes, you can and you can also combine this paid parental leave with other forms of paid leave including annual leave and long service leave.

### **Where does the money from?**

Eligible employees will be paid by their employers however the money will actually be provided by the government costing around \$730 million over 5 years.

### **What about my partner? Are they entitled to any paid leave?**

From the middle of next year, eligible working fathers and partners will be entitled to two weeks paid paternity leave at the National Minimum Wage. This is an additional two weeks (on top of the 18 weeks Paid Parental Leave Scheme).

**For more information about the scheme please contact your Family Assistance Office or call 13 61 50**